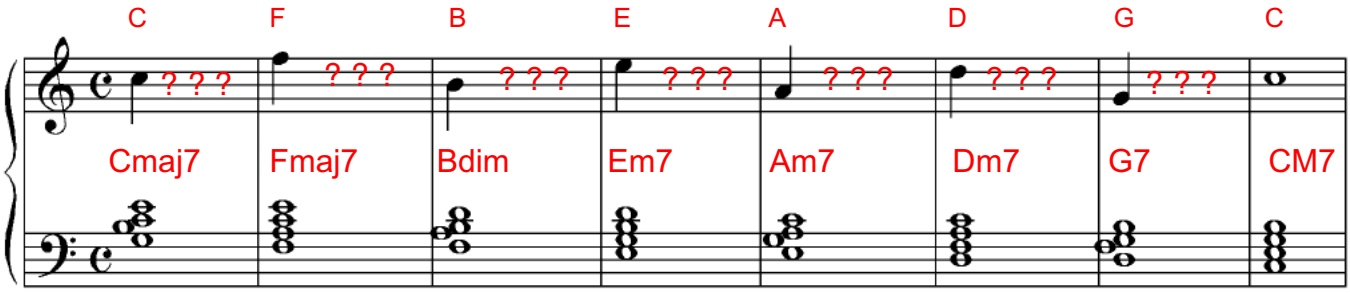
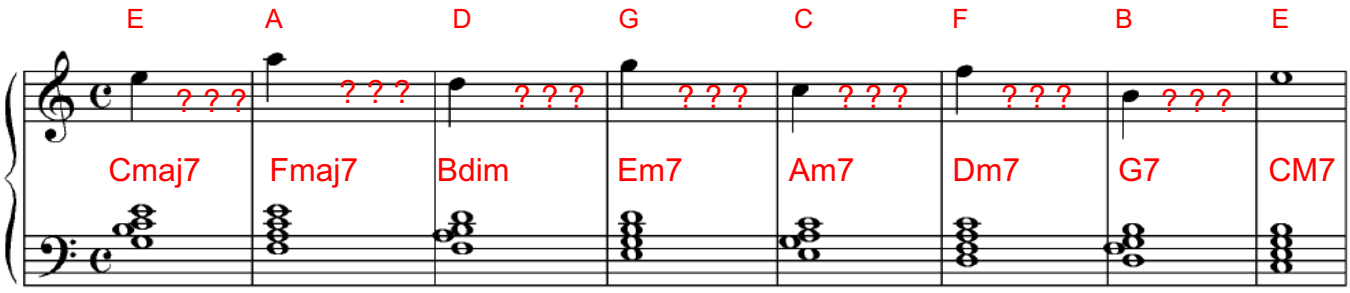
PATTERN 7. START EACH BAR WITH THE ROOT OF THE CHORD

Then improvise the remainder of the bar. Remember that you don't HAVE to play four notes in each bar.



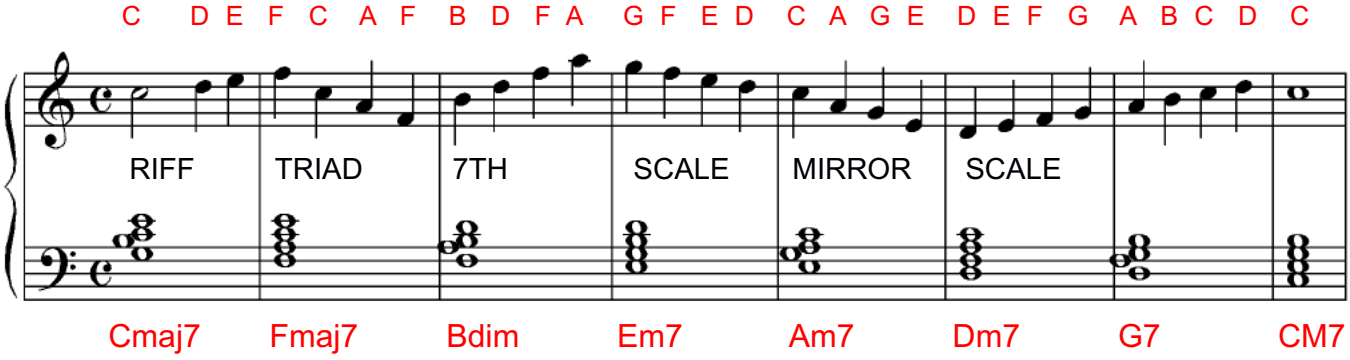
PATTERN 8. START EACH BAR WITH THE THIRD OF THE CHORD

Try the same as you did for riff 7 then try starting on the 5th and even the 7th.



PATTERN 9. MIX IT UP

This is where you get to experiment with all the various ideas.
It is better to have SOME kind of underlying structure to start with or fall back on.
This is why jazz musicians practice scales and patterns.



CATERPILLAR JAZZ TALK

Learn from Beethoven

Newcomers to improvisation often play too many random notes because they imagine that if they just played one or two at a time it would sound like they had nothing to ‘say’.

But if you look at some of the world’s greatest composers they OFTEN used just ONE or TWO phrases as the basis of some of their finest compositions.

Think about Beethoven’s Fifth Symphony.
Everyone knows that famous opening phrase
‘Da da da Daah - da da da daah’

If you really listen closely you will discover that he repeats this basic pattern a seemingly ENDLESS number of times. It’s clearly what you DO with the pattern that counts.

The next time you listen to some Jazz notice how often patterns are repeated either in an ascending or descending way and they sound GREAT!

PREDICTABILITY and UNCERTAINTY

The best songs tend to have a balance between predictability and uncertainty. It’s nice - at times - to be able to guess where the song is going to go next . This can make us feel part of the creation of the song but If the song becomes TOO predictable it can become boring. It’s exciting to be led in another direction now and then. This keeps our interest.

Think about this when you are improvising or writing melodies. Don’t be afraid to be predictable or repetitive but try to maintain interest as well even if that means using ONE riff in an amazing variety of ways like Mr Beethoven!